

NEWS and GOSSIP of WASHINGTON



Birds of the White House Enjoy Shower Baths

WASHINGTON.—The feathered tenants of the White House grounds have discovered the delights of the shower bath. And birds of many kinds are taking advantage of the excellent accommodations provided by the rotary lawn sprinkler. The blackbirds, most inquisitive and curious of all birds, first found out about it. It may have been accident that led the bird Columbus in this exploit under the spattering drops of water thrown off by the sprinkler. If so he found it good. Generous, or unable to keep his counsel, he spread the news. Other blackbirds tried it with resulting delight. Then the tale spread of this advance in bird civilization.

And still the wonder grew as bird after bird submitted itself to the pleasure of the bath. The sparrows, who inhabit two whole trees in the White House grounds when they are at home for a night's rest, found it so good that they quarreled for place and turn.

Then a few thrushes who live in the precincts acquired the shower-bath habit. And finally the pigeons and doves, slowest to adopt new customs, were converted. So the shower-bath cult has grown among the birds.

There are a half dozen such lawn sprinklers scattered over the White House grounds, with purpose or hope to make the grass grow. They are going all day, scattering drops of rain in an ever revolving circle. As is modest, the birds take their shower baths in secluded spots where the sprinklers are at work.

"Old Nick," the Champion Long-Distance Smoker

UNCLE SAM has the champion long-distance smoker of the world, consuming 1,000 cigars a day on an average. They call him "Old Nick," not because he is in any way diabolical, but because he can hold an amazing amount of nicotine. And it takes very little effort of the imagination to characterize "Old Nick" as a human being; for, in make-up, he performs all the functions of the flesh and blood lover of the weed, even to the action of the lungs. "Old Nick" is merely an ingenious apparatus for testing cigars.

Uncle Sam's mechanical man is no fastidious chooser of what he smokes. The most expensive imported brand and the humblest of the domestic are the same to him. In the lower left-hand corner of his mechanical anatomy is a jar, in the cork of which are inserted the tubes holding four cigars. The receptacle contains water which takes up the nicotine. So it is that none of it gets into the "lungs" of "Old Nick," and the smoke that goes out from his "mouth"—the exhaust—is wholly free from nicotine. The "lung" is at the extreme right and inhales and exhales the smoke of the cigars.

A tube leads into the "lung" from the jar into which four individual cigar tubes are placed. There is also an intermediate jar, which arrests whatever of the nicotine may have escaped from the direct repository.

Thus, you see that, while "Old Nick" may be literally soaked in nicotine and be a confirmed "inhaler," he has none of the vice of the inhaler, for the smoke that enters his "lungs" bears no deleterious elements.

One Woman Who Knows Secrets, and Keeps Them

THERE is only one woman in the United States who has knowledge of international events before they happen. Her name is Margaret M. Hanna. She is the confidential secretary and assistant of the second assistant secretary of state, Alvey A. Adee, who is the only permanent official of high rank in the department.

No matter who may be the executive head of the department, and regardless of whether the administration is Democratic or Republican, the course of the foreign office is steered by Mr. Adee. All of the diplomatic affairs are managed by him. The complex unwritten code called international law is to him familiar in its every paragraph, and he has all precedents at his fingers' ends. But it goes without saying that such business involves an immense amount of detail, which is where the peculiar and exceptional talent of Miss Hanna comes into play. She takes all that part of the work off Mr. Adee's hands. To him she is like a card catalogue to a librarian—and quite a bit more, in addition.

Incidentally to her duties she helps to prepare many state papers that are in the last degree confidential in character. She is the custodian of many an important secret affecting the welfare of the country; but, from her point of view, this is merely a part of the day's work. She forgets the secret automatically when she leaves the office and goes home.

It has often been said that a woman cannot keep a secret. Perhaps most women cannot. Holding that belief, wrongly or rightly, the department of state prefers not to employ them in confidential capacities. But the rule is broken in Miss Hanna's case. She knows how to keep a secret, and the government of the United States is willing to bank on her reliability in this regard.

Snake Bite Antidote for Forest Service Men

BEST pocket instruments for treating snake bites, always possibilities among the experiences that befall woodsmen, are to be furnished by the United States forest service to its field employees. The device when not in use is apparently a plain wooden cylinder, about the length of a cigarette and slightly larger in diameter, and has a screw cap on each end. When one of the caps is removed there is disclosed a small lancet, with which the bitten part may be quickly slit open. The other end of the cylinder is hollow and contains a supply of permanganate of potash crystals, one of the most effective antidotes for the poison of snakes' fangs. The crystals are placed in the open wound as soon as possible after the bite is received, and become effective by dissolving and entering the blood. Similar instruments have been used regularly by the field force of the geological survey for several years and have in many cases been the means of saving life.

The dangers to which forest workers are subjected of being bitten by poisonous reptiles are forcibly brought out in a recent report to forest service headquarters in Washington from the Shasta national forest in northern California. Three men, sent across the path of a recent fire to fight flames, found themselves completely surrounded by scores of rattlesnakes that had been driven from their rocky lairs by the heat. It was necessary for the firefighters to turn snake-fighters, since they could neither advance nor retreat. After a six-hour battle all the reptiles were killed and it was possible for the forest employees to reach and extinguish the fire.

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SAVED MINISTER'S LIFE.

Rev. W. H. Warner, Frederick, Md., writes: "My trouble was Sclerotic. My back was affected and took the form of Lumbago. I also had Neuralgia, cramps in my muscles, pressure or sharp pain on the top of my head and nervous dizzy spells. I had other symptoms showing that my kidneys were at fault, so I took Dodd's Kidney Pills. They were the means of saving my life."

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Getting Even.

"The cook asked for a week off to get married, so I gave it to her."

"I don't think I would have done that. You can't spare her very well now."

"I know I can't, but it was the only way I saw to ever get even with her."

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HAD REAL IDEA OF ECONOMY

Jap Explains How Family Was Enabled to Use One Fan Two or Three Generations.

Among the Japanese economy is held to be a high virtue. Two old miners of Tokyo were one day discussing ways and means of saving.

"I manage to make a fan last about twenty years," said one, "and this is my system: I don't wastefully open the whole fan and wave it carelessly. I open only one section at a time. That is good for about a year. Then I open the next, and so on until the fan is eventually used up."

"Twenty years for a good fan!" exclaimed the other. "What sinful extravagance! In my family we use a fan for two or three generations, and this is how we do it: We open the whole fan, but we don't wear it out by waving it. Oh, no! We hold it still, like this, under our nose, and wave our face!"—Everybody's.

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Entertaining White.

A writer gives a little sketch of black and white in Natal. He tells how he came across a white boy, some fourteen years old, and a group of raw natives playing a game. They were shooting with an old muzzle-loading shotgun at a bottle on the top of a case. When the youngster smashed a bottle he received a "tickel" (a threepenny bit) from the natives. When a native hit it he received three-pence from the boy.

"That seems a funny sort of game," remarked the witness to the boy.

"Oh, the game's all right, sir," replied the lad. "You see, I load the gun."

Not Here.

She was looking for an apartment. "It must be in a first class neighborhood," she said, "and it must have ten large rooms, three baths and all modern improvements, and I won't pay a cent over \$40 a month."

"I know the very place you're looking for," replied the agent, "but if you want to find out how to get there you'll have to consult a clergyman."

Explanation.

"What's an automobile lunch?"

"Why, the kind you see put up all ready for a motor trip."

The Test.

"I have been chasing a smuggler."

"I call that a pursuit of duty."

Period of Romance Ended.

"No more shall I hear his footsteps on yonder walk just as the clock strikes eight."

"Gracious Jeannette!"

"And the old parlor light will never burn low for him again."

"You don't mean it?"

"I do; and, furthermore, he will never sit on this sofa three nights a week and call me pet names, as he has been doing for two years."

"I am astonished!"

"And tonight I am going to burn all the old love letters in my chest of drawers."

"But why? Are you going to discard him?"

"Discard him! Why, you goose, I am going to marry him!"

Too Much for Them.

It was a minstrel performance, and in the intervals between the songs the usual jokes were being perpetrated.

"What am de difference between an old maid and a married woman?" asked Sambo.

"I done give it up," replied Bones.

"Why," exclaimed Sambo, "de old maid am lookin' for a husband every day, an' de married woman am lookin' for 'im every night!"

There was a pause, and several elderly gentlemen got up and stole softly into the night.

What He Used Them For.

Customer—I want another fire extinguisher. Used the last one all up last night.

Clerk—Glad to sell them to you, sir, but aren't you rather careless at your place. That is the third one I've sold you in a week.

Customer—Oh, I don't use them for fire. They are the greatest thing on earth for chasing out your daughter's late callers.—Judge.

No Compromise.

"Is Jiggers consistent in his vegetarianism?"

"I should say he is. Why, he won't even eat cabbage, because it is so intimately associated with corned beef."

The Menu.

"My friend is a woodman."

"Then why not order chops?"—Baltimore American.

Why They Didn't Go.

"How did it happen you didn't away during the summer? I thought you were having an extensive outfit prepared for you?"

"That was the trouble. By the time I got the outfit paid for I didn't have any money left."

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MINING POWDER